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# A spectrum and profile approach to discourse analysis

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## Abstract

*A text needs to be approached in terms of its situation (physical setting or social/intellectual milieu) in which it is composed, in terms of the addressee-interpreter's contribution to the understanding of the text (schemata, scripts, and referential frames), and in terms of the text itself. The latter complex of considerations certainly includes at least the macrostructure (germinal idea or overall conception), constituency (embedded discourses, paragraphs, and sentences), and texture. This paper develops the third concern under the twin rubrics Spectrum and Profile. Until these terms are given more meaning in the body of this paper, suffice it to say here that both spectrum and profile have to do with the complementary concerns of cohesion and prominence in discourse structure; that spectrum has to do largely with continuing strands of information which at once unite a discourse and distinguish hierarchically the types of information within it; and that profile has to do with the linguistic reflexes of mounting and declining tension (or excitement) within a discourse.*

## 1. Spectrum

1.1. Following an early clue from Gleason, Grimes (1978) categorized types of information in narrative discourse. He pointed out that such a text not only contains information concerning *events* and *participants*, but also further sorts of information which he variously labeled *setting* (spatial-temporal, circumstantial, and introductory material especially appropriate to the onset of a story or of a section of a story) *background* (similar, but less bunched and hence more scattered through the narrative) *comment* (evaluation by the

narrator), and *collateral* (alternatives, most quotations, and most negatives). Hopper (1979), following a lead from Reid (1976) and others, has described the grammatical base (choice of a particular tense/aspect/mode/voice, word order, marking by an affix or particle) for distinguishing *foregrounded* events in a story from *backgrounded* events, activities, and situations. Fleming's (1978) approach to discourse makes similar distinctions. Jones and Jones (1979), writing of 'multiple levels of information in discourse', distinguish not only an event-line for narrative, but cite data for languages that morphosyntactically mark a distinction of pivotal versus routine events on the one hand, and routine versus down-graded events on the other. The latter, down-graded events, merge with the other supportive information types. In turn, however, there may be resources to distinguish (on the basis of marking in certain languages) crucial supportive material from routine supportive material. The data underlying the study are drawn from ten Mesoamerican languages. In brief, categories of information which Grimes once distinguished largely on a semantic basis are more and more seen to correlate with distinctions made in the morphosyntax of the world's languages.

1.2. Before going further into the argument of this section, it is useful to stop and illustrate the general binary division (events versus nonevents, fore-grounded versus background) which is indicated above, as well as the Jones-and-Jones claim that more than a simple dichotomy is involved here. Note the following paragraph from Mark Twain:

Example 1

In a minute a third slave was struggling in the air. It was dreadful, I turned away my head for a moment, and when I turned back I missed the king! They were blindfolding him! I was paralyzed; I couldn't move. I was choking, my tongue was petrified. They finished blindfolding him, they led him under the rope. I couldn't shake off that clinging impotence. But when I saw them put the noose around his neck, then everything let go in me and I made a spring to the rescue – and as I made it I shot one more glance abroad – by George! here they came, a-tilting! – five hundred mailed and belted knights on bicycles!

In this paragraph there is a certain amount of action along with a considerable amount of material which depicts the situation, describes the (fictitive) narrator's emotions, and portrays the scene when help finally arrives. We note

the following simple past tenses – which are presumably candidates for the 'event-line' in the story: (1) 'turned (away my head)', (2) 'turned (back)', (3) 'missed (the king)', (4) 'finished (blindfolding him)', (5) 'led (him)', (6) 'saw (them put the noose)', (7) '(everything) let go (in me)', (8) 'made (a spring)', (9) 'made (it)', (10) 'shot (one more glance)'. Some rather graphic details are given in the past progressive: ..., 'a third slave was struggling in the air' ... 'They were blindfolding him' ... 'I was choking'. Still other clauses which contain the stative 'be' depict the narrator's emotions: 'It was dreadful', ... 'I was paralyzed' ... 'my tongue was petrified'. Two clauses of similar semantic content use a modal and negative: 'I couldn't move' ... 'I couldn't shake off that clinging impotence'. It seems possible that, in addition to the fact that clauses whose verbs employ the event-line past tense should be distinguished from supportive clauses which employ other sorts of verb forms, we could make a beginning at drawing distinctions among the latter as well. Thus, very probably the past progressive pictures a background activity that is secondary to the event-line in importance. Then clauses that have statives and negative modals probably rank lower in information relevance; as used here they are depictive of the narrator's emotions and his feeling of impotence.

But we must reexamine the putative event-line verbs just listed. Three of the simple past-tense action verbs are, it turns out, in adverbial clauses which serve to provide cohesion via back-reference. Thus, 'when I turned back' is a cohesive back-reference to the previous clause, 'I turned away my head for a moment'. Likewise, 'when I saw them put the noose around his neck' re-flects the next step (in the hanging script) after (4) and (5): 'They finished blindfolding him', 'they led him under the rope'. So close is this predictable script connection that 'put the noose around his neck' is, in effect, a back-reference to 'under the rope'. Not too different is the sort of back-reference involved in 'as I made it', which builds on 'I made a spring to the rescue'.

What is the upshot of all this? The above analysis shows that they are used past-tense verbs (2), (6), and (9) in adverbial clauses in a secondary capacity. They do not so much announce new events as use references to past events for the purposes of cohesion. They can, therefore, be excluded from the event-line of this passage. In that they treat of script-predictable actions which closely ensue on event-line actions, they are still of a certain relevance to the story. They are, however, mainly cohesive in function. In information rank they should perhaps be ranked between the event-line proper and the past progressives (which are activities rather than events). Alternatively, we might consider that the past progressives encode

activities that are less predictable (and hence more salient) than the events encoded in the adverbial clauses.

Another problem is illustrated by the very last simple past tense above: 'here they came, a-tilting'. Note that this clause is part of the narrator's report of what he saw (reported as 'I shot one more glance . . .'). Furthermore, it is evident that the action which is reported ('here they came . . .') is meant to be continuative — which explains the 'a-tilting' which follows. This is, therefore, a past tense essentially of the rank of the past progressives or lower. This illustrates a fundamental ambiguity of English past-tense forms in some verbs. This is especially true of verbs of sensation and awareness. Thus 'I knew that something was wrong' could be, in appropriate context, event-line (i.e., equal to 'I concluded that something was wrong') or supportive-descriptive. Probably adverbial expressions help resolve this ambiguity in English, so that 'I knew right off that something was wrong' refers to an event, while 'I knew all the time that something was wrong' seems rather obviously to be a piece of supportive material.
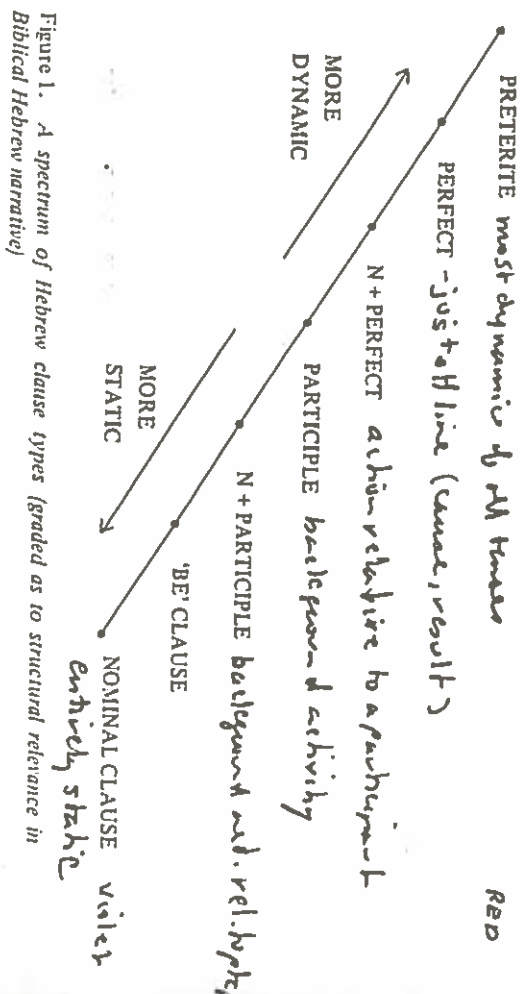
The above paragraph illustrates the usefulness of a binary division in narrative discourse between the foregrounded event-line and supportive material. The former is correlated in English with independent clauses whose verb is past tense and not the verb 'be' nor a verb which is shown by other features (e.g., adverbial expressions) to be depictive. The further tense forms and verb types are indicative of supportive material. On the other hand, the wealth of differing forms which characterize the latter leads us strongly to suspect that even these forms can be arranged in some fashion in a hierarchy or cline. Diversity must always be explained. Differing forms of tense/aspect/mood/voice do not exist for nothing in a language. Our belief is that such variety serves the needs of discourse.

1.3. At this point, while agreeing largely with Jones and Jones on 'levels of information relevance in discourse', I want to invoke a new metaphor and derive from it a new term. The metaphor is from optics and the new term is 'spectrum'. Just as a spectographic analysis of white light separates out various hues (our perception of differing wave lengths) ranging from red to violet, so the analysis of a narrative text reveals a cline of information which ranges from the most dynamic elements of the story to the most static (depictive) elements; successive positions along the cline correlate well (as a whole) with distinctions among the verb forms of a language (i.e., with the tense/aspect/mode/voice system), but other features (word order, use of affixes, particles, or adverbs) must sometimes be invoked to round out the picture. Thus, the

SPECTRUM = CLINE OF VERB TENSES & THEIR RELATIVE RANK IN INDICATING EITHER EVENT-LINE OR SUPPORT

English verb forms illustrated in the above paragraph could perhaps be arranged in the order: past tense (action verbs in independent clauses; sensation and awareness verbs properly qualified), past tense in subordinate clauses, past progressive, past tense in verbs whose adverbial qualifiers indicate that they are depictive, statives ('be') with or without modals. The English pluperfect presents special problems and is beyond the scope of this paper. It is probable that clines of this general sort are not limited to narrative discourse but characterize other discourse types as well (cf. 1.3.4. below).

1.3.1. Possibly Biblical Hebrew narrative is one of the clearest places to posit with confidence a spectrum which involves considerable diversity of verb and clause structure. Note Figure 1, which ranks Hebrew verbs and clauses according to a rank scheme.

MORE
DYNAMIC

PRETERITE  most dynamic of all tenses  RED

PERFECT - just off line (cause, result)

N + PERFECT  action relative to a perchingent

PARTICIPLE  background activity

N + PARTICIPLE  background act. rel. bgchen

'BE' CLAUSE

NOMINAL CLAUSE  entirely stative  violet

MORE
STATIC

Figure 1.  A spectrum of Hebrew clause types (graded as to structural relevance in Biblical Hebrew narrative)

Verbs and clauses at the upper left-hand side are the most dynamic; those at the lower right-hand side are the most static (depictive) and are, in fact, nominal clauses which contain no verb at all. The term 'preterite' is a summary way of referring to a special narrative tense which developed in Biblical Hebrew. This tense apparently consisted of a fused particle w' 'and', which seemed to 'convert' an incompletive into a completive and was structurally distinct from the ordinary conjunctive 'and'. Actually, the form is not so summarily explained and has a very complex history which need not concern us here. Suffice it to observe that (1) this is a special 'narrative tense' even

according to the Gesenius–Kautsch–Cowley grammar of 1910 (Cowley, 1910: 326); (2) it must occur clause-initial and cannot tolerate a preposed noun or even the word *lō'* 'not'. Whenever there is a preposed noun or *lō'* 'not', we find not a preterite following it within the clause but rather another verb form, the suffixal verb, which is commonly called the perfect. All this makes good sense in terms of discourse structure. Clauses with initial verbs present actions and events, while clauses with initial nouns present participants or props. The latter are a step away from the event-line, which they compromise in the interests of presenting or highlighting a participant or a prop. This distinction correlates, in fact, with an old distinction drawn by the medieval Arabic grammarians, according to which all verb-initial clauses were called 'verbal clauses' and all clauses with initial nouns were called 'nominal clauses' (Cowley, 1910: 451).

To return, then, to the scheme represented in the diagram, preterites (exclusive of the preterite of *hayāh* 'be') represent the most dynamic elements of the narrative spectrum. Clauses which, while not preposing a noun, nevertheless abandon the preterite for a perfect are presenting *secondary actions* of some sort (e.g., a cause, a predicable result, or a pluperfect). Clauses which prepose a noun (usually subject, sometimes object) to the perfect are a peg lower in the spectrum; they are *action relative to a given participant*; hence they are often used to highlight temporally a participant where the context is mainly about someone else, or to shift the spotlight back to and reintroduce a central participant. Still lower in the scheme are participles which present *background activities*, and clauses with noun plus participle which represent *background activities relative to a given participant*. Even lower still come equational clauses with 'be'; and finally, completely verbless clauses. 'Empty (was) the well. No water (was) in it.' The placement of negative clauses with perfects in the spectrum is still problematical, but they seem clearly not to be event-line.

Notice the operations of various Hebrew verbs and clauses in the following passage, Gen. 40: 20-23 (presented in transliterated Hebrew, with literal and free translations):

Example 2

(1)   wayˇhiy bayyōm haššˇliyšiy yōm hulledet 'et-parˇ'ōh
(2)   wayya'aś mišteh lˇkāl-'ˇbādāyw.

(3)   wayyiśśā' 'et-rō'š śar hammaškiym wˇ' et-rō'š śar hā'ōpiym bˇtok 'ˇbādāyw.
(4)   wayyāśeb 'et-śar hammaškiym 'al maškēhū.
(5)   wayyittēn haccôs 'al-cap parˇ'ōh.
(6)   wˇ'et śar hā'ōpiym tālāh.
(7)   ka' ˇšer pātar lāhem yôsēp.
(8)   wˇlō' zākar śar-hammaškiym 'et-yôsēp.
(9)   wayyiškāhēhū.

(1) And-it-happened on-the-day, the third, (the) day that-was-born Pharaoh,
(2) And-he-made (a) banquet for-all servants-his.
(3) And-he-raised the-head-of (the) chief-of the-cupbearers and-the-head-of (the) chief-of-the-bakers amidst servants-his.
(4) And-he-restored the-chief-of-the-cupbearers to position-his.
(5) And-he-gave the-cup to-(the)-hand-of Pharaoh.
(6) But-the-chief-of-the-bakers (he) hanged
(7) as (he) interpreted to-them Joseph.
(8) And-not (he) remembered (the) chief-of-the-cupbearers, Joseph.
(9) But-he-forgot-him.

(1) So it happened that on the third day, Pharaoh's birthday, (2) he made a banquet for all his court. (3) And he brought out the chief cupbearer and the chief baker and considered their cases before all his court. (4) Then he restored the chief cupbearer to his position, (5) so that he again handed the cup to Pharaoh. (6) But he hanged the chief baker. (7) All this happened just as Joseph had interpreted their dreams to them. (8) But the chief cupbearer didn't remember Joseph. (9) On the contrary, he forgot all about him.

In the above example, clauses 2,3,4,5, and 9 are on the event-line, by virtue of having verbs in the preterite in the required clause-initial position. Clause 1 is barred from the event-line according to a rule (common to many languages) that the verb *to be* is typically nonactive and descriptive; the *wayˇhiy* 'and-it-happened' introduces a temporal phrase, has as its complement clause two, and is near the bottom of the cline which is represented in Figure 1. All the preterite of clauses 2-5 and 9 display the typical structure of a preterite with prefixed *wā-* and doubling of the first consonant (here a prefixal *y-* third person sg. masc.).

Clauses 6-8, the intervening clauses, contain off-the-line materials. In

clause 6, the noun phrase, 'the chief baker', is clause-initial and the following verb *tālāh* '(he) hanged' is a perfect (third from the top of the spectrum). Here local contrastive focus is put on the baker as opposed to the cupbearer. On the other hand, this clause has a perfect and is off the event-line of the story. This is plausible in that the baker here drops out of the story and his fate is irrelevant to the unfolding of subsequent events. The cupbearer, in spite of temporary failure, will by contrast prove crucial to subsequent events (the elevation of Joseph to the lordship of Egypt). Clause 7 is also off the event-line — as a subordinate clause and as a flashback (where English uses a pluperfect): 'as Joseph had interpreted to them'. The verb of this clause (*pātar* 'interpreted') is also a perfect (second from the top of the spectrum). Clause 8 is also off the event-line. First of all, it preposes *lō'* 'not' to the verb — which necessitates a shift to the perfect (*zākar* 'remember'). Second, it is a negative paraphrase of the event-line verb in 9. Finally, with clause 9, we return to the event-line. Participles and nominal clauses do not figure in this example.

1.3.2. For the Halbi language, an Indoeuropean language of India, Frances Woods (1980) posits the scheme presented in Figure 2. In the upper left-hand
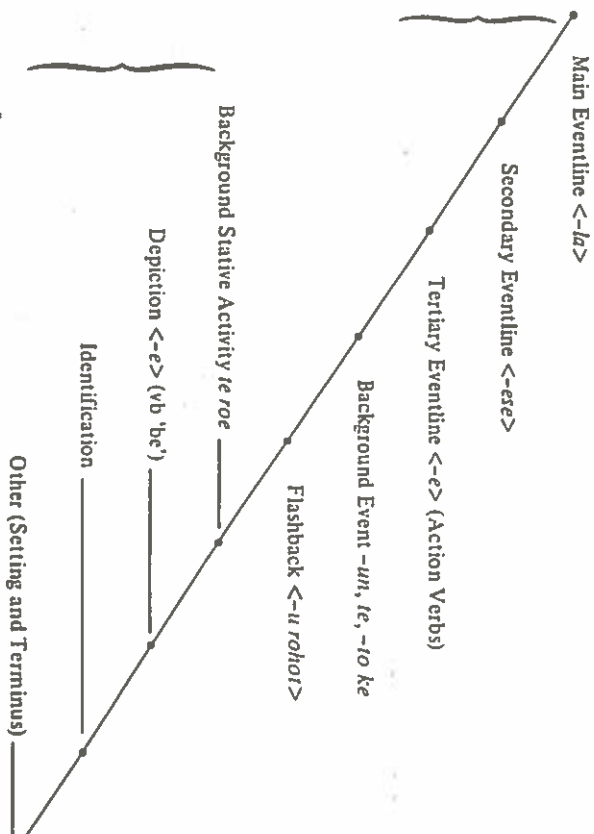
Main Eventline <-la>

Secondary Eventline <-ese>

Tertiary Eventline <-e> (Action Verbs)

Background Event -un, te, -io ke

Flashback <-u rohoi>

Background Stative Activity te roe

Depiction <-e> (vb 'be')

Identification

Other (Setting and Terminus)

Figure 2.   *Halbi: relative importance of events and nonevents (Woods, 1980)*

corner we find the main event-line, carried by verbs which are marked with [-la]person-number suffixes (-l occurs in every person and number). These verbs are characterized by Woods as 'completed action' verbs. First-order digressions from the event-line (continuing the temporal sequence of events but of less prominence) are marked by [-ese]person-number suffixes (-s- occurs in every person and number); these verbs are characterized by Woods as 'present incomplete'. She further observes that 'marking an event as less important (through the use of the present incomplete endings) indicates that either the event itself is not in focus or that the participant performing the activity lacks prominence' (Woods, 1980: 125). Her 'tertiary event-line' is a device for representing events that are presented as 'background and routine'; these are marked by [-e]person-number suffixes which indicate *only* person-number categories and have no tense-aspect component. To summarize the rest of the structures involved: backgrounded events (still more distant from the main lines of the story) are encoded as dependent verbs; backgrounded stative activity by still another main verb plus auxiliary complex; depiction by the verb 'be' plus the [-e] endings; identification by another 'be' verb that is existential in import; and setting and terminus by still other more specialized and involved constructions. In overall outline we obtain a spectrum not so different from the Hebrew spectrum presented above, but the details are very different, in accordance with the markedly different tense-aspect systems of the two languages.

1.3.3. Still another language for which we may extrapolate such a spectrum (from published material: Bishop, 1979) is Northern Totonac (Mexico). See Figure 3.

Pret (Ind)

Pret (Dep)

Impf

Past Prog. (durative)

Pluperfect (pluperfect)

Present, Present Perfect, and Future

*—convencil*
*—negahive*
*ri-/ju + pret somewhere along here*

*an\tan /used sparingly to highlight a predicate in accordance with the purpose of the author in telling the story.*

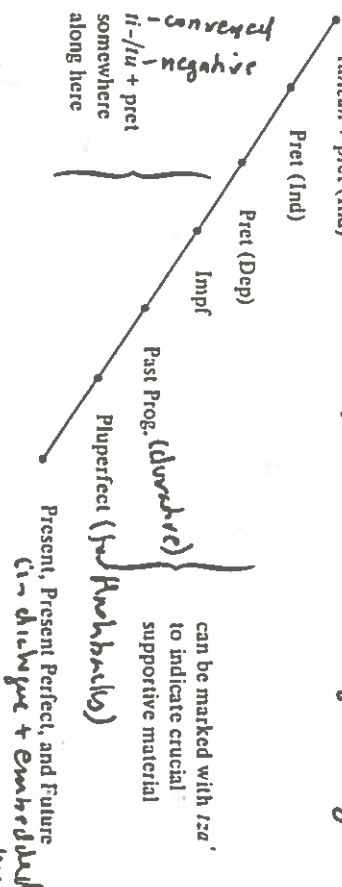*can be marked with iza' to indicate crucial supportive material*

Figure 3.   *Tentative spectrum for Northern Totonac (extrapolated from Bishop, 1979)*

Here the most pivotal events are encoded in a clause introduced with *tuncan* 'and then' and with an independent preterite as verb. Clauses without the special tagging conjunction but with an independent preterite represent more routine events. Dependent clauses with preterites are still lower (cf. English example above). Secondary events or activities encoded in clauses whose verbs are imperfect follow next; the imperfect is here a general backgrounding tense, much as in Romance and Slavic languages. Probably somewhat lower are clauses whose verbs are past progressives; here a background activity is certainly intended. Pluperfects possibly come next as events out of the line of succession in the story and therefore clearly background, rather than part of the ongoing narrative; they are used for flashback and for back-reference (cohesion). Somewhere down here also fit preterites which are prefixed with *tī-* 'negative' or *tī-* 'frustrative', 'in vain'. Such verbs represent actions that 'don't get off the launching pad'. Even further down come presents, present perfects, and futures, which figure in stories mainly in quotes and in awareness depiction. It is of considerable interest that clauses whose verbs are compara-tively low in the spectrum — certainly not event-line — can be tagged with *-tza'* to mark them as especially crucial bits of background and supportive information.

1.3.4. I have referred previously to the possibility that discourse types other than narrative may have similar spectra of information relevance. In Hebrew predictive discourse the *wav* plus the perfect or suffixal tense (with the verb initial in its clause ) is the most dynamic form of the verb, while the imperfect (prefixal) tense is next in rank. Next comes a clause with a preposed noun plus a verb in the imperfect. Participles and nominal clauses presum-ably rank lower still. Prediction is, however, broadly conceived as a kind of narration-in-the-future, so this general overall similarity to narrative should not surprise us.

What about hortatory discourse? It is rather well known that one of the features of hortatory discourse is the scale of mitigation/aggravation on which commands distribute themselves (Labov and Fanshell, 1977). Usually, however, a whole discourse has a certain tenor in this regard — a tenor quite regularly correlated with the age and social status of the speaker relative to those of the hearer. An employer speaking to his employee or an adult to his child may use bald imperatives, which would not be appropriate within his peer group. Possibly, however, some hortatory discourses display a scale of aggravation versus mitigation that is not unlike the dynamic-static spectrum of narrative discourse.

Expository discourse might also be investigated from this point of view. Linda Jones (1977) has indicated a scale of grammatical constructions which mark ever-inclusive domains of thematicity.

Alternatively, maybe the spectrum of dynamism constructed for narrative is of relevance everywhere, and other discourse types simply implement dif-ferent parts of the same scheme. Thus, description typically implement forms from the lower parts of the spectrum (from the 'violet' instead of the 'red' end). Clearly, however, this is not of much help in hortatory discourse, since imperatives (and their surrogates) are not mentioned at all in the narra-tive spectrum.

## 2.  Profile

Most discourse is not spoken or written on a uniform level of excitation and tension. Rather a discourse normally has a cumulative development which customarily occurs toward its end — or at least past its middle. The flow of discourse seems to quicken and grow more turbulent at such a point. To this point we can quite naturally apply the term 'peak'. I want to argue here for peak as (1) a structure which correlates with underlying notional categories; (2) something marked in the surface structure of the language; (3) a practical zone of analytical difficulty for the analyst; and (4) a feature which serves to give a Profile to a whole discourse which includes one or more such units.

2.1. Two sorts of peaks can occur in a narrative: action peaks and the-matic (didactic) peaks. Action peaks relate to the underlying (notional) structure of a narrative in that a surface-structure peak correlates with the climax or with the denouement of a narrative. This assumes an underlying structure of the following sort: Exposition ('lay it out'): Inciting Incident ('get something going'), Mounting Tension ('keep heating it up'). Climax ('knot it all up proper'); Denouement ('loosen at some crucial point'), Lessen-ing Tension ('keep on loosening it'), and Closure ('wrap it up'). What is chosen for marking as peak will conform, as has been said, with the spot of maximum tension (Climax) or the crucial event (Denouement) which makes possible the resolution of the plot.

If the story has but one action peak, then one or the other of these two crucial plot elements is chosen for surface-structure highlighting. Thus, if only the notional climax is featured as peak, then the notional denouement is treated simply as a postpeak episode in the surface structure. If, on the r

hand, only the denouement is featured as surface-structure peak, then the climax is treated simply as a prepeak episode in the surface structure. Finally, if both climax and denouement are featured as peaks in the surface structure, then we posit a peak and a peak' (with the possibility of one or more inter-peak episodes). These possibilities are summarized in Figures 4 and 5.
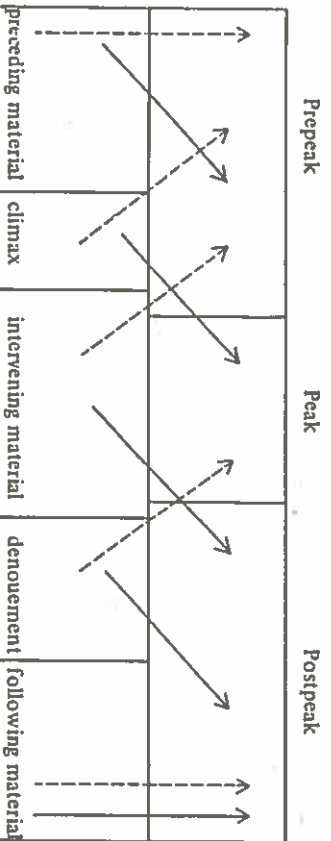
| Prepeak | Peak | Postpeak |
|---|---|---|

| preceding material | climax | intervening material | denouement | following material |
|---|---|---|---|---|

Figure 4.   *Possibility 1 (with either climax or denouement featured as peak; not both)*

| Prepeak | Peak | Interpeak | Peak' | Postpeak |
|---|---|---|---|---|

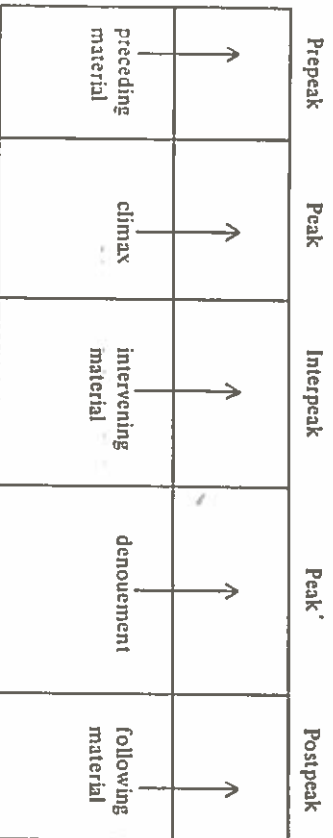| preceding material | climax | intervening material | denouement | following material |
|---|---|---|---|---|

Figure 5.   *Possibility 2 (with two action peaks)*

A narrative may also have a thematic (didactic) peak. Since this was first suggested by Fran Woods in reference to Halbi, I reproduce here her table contrasting action peaks and didactic peaks (Woods, 1980: 281): see Table 1.

The didactic peak presumably occurs after the action peak of a narrative. Presumably, if a discourse were to have two action peaks and a didactic peak, the latter would follow the other two.

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Table 1.   *Didactic Peak contrasted with narrative Peak (from Woods, 1980)*

| Didactic Peak | Narrative Peak |
|---|---|
| No chronological progression | Marked chronological progression |
| Cyclic structure | Forward movement |
| 2 participants only and little description | Crowded with participants and much description |
| Crowded with props and extensive descriptions | Limited props and limited description |
| Dialogue | Events |

According to Woods, chronological movement ceases at didactic peak and someone *talks*. While in her Halbi myth the talking takes the form of dialogue, it can be a monologue (speech by the main character) or even quotation of a written document. Whatever the case, the embedded material is nonnarrative and is either hortatory or expository. The cyclic structure (chiasmus) that she observes for the Halbi myth is probably specific to that text, but it is never-theless not uncommon in well-composed hortatory and expository materials. The attention to props and description is common in didactic peaks, even if not universal.

In the sections that follow I will make little further reference to didactic peaks but will treat almost exclusively of action peaks.

2.2. Peaks are identified as such by a variety of means. The storyteller has, so to speak, a bag of tricks available for peak-marking. I have described these in detail elsewhere (Longacre, 1976). Consequently, I will summarize briefly at this point. Illustration of peak will be reserved for 2.3 below.

One of the commonest ways of marking a peak is *rhetorical underlining*, i.e., various devices are used to insure that the peak does not 'go by too fast.' Devices of repetition (somewhat cleverly disguised by a skillful writer) and paraphrase may be used. In general, this device is applicable to other dis-course types as well as to narrative.

With narratives, however, rhetorical underlining can take some very specific forms. The narrator can in some manner *pack or extend the event-line*. Thus, he can report a lot of detail that would not be appropriate to routine narration. The camera is slowed down by focusing on the minutiae, the component actions of an overall action. This, in effect, is the answer to a problem raised by van Dijk: granted that the narrator cannot tell everything that happens, how much *does* he tell? (van Dijk, 1977: 108-111). In routine narration overmuch detail is distracting and obscures the mainline of the story, but at

the peak of a narrative such detail can be introduced to mark the peak.

Thus, at the peak of a story it may be appropriate to describe in detail how a person deliberately rises out of a chair, i.e., how he shifts his weight forward to the balls of his feet, how he grasps the edge of the table where he is sitting, and how he deliberately pulls himself erect. If this precedes a dramatic event such as, 'then, pointing his finger right under Duncan's nose, he said, "Duncan, it's no use, I've got enough evidence to convict you" — it is quite appropriate. Such an amount of detail regarding particular body parts and muscular movements would not be appropriate in routine, nonpeak narration.

Such a packing of the event-line often results in a higher verb/nonverb ratio at the peak than for the story as a whole. Thus, for Ga'dang (Philippines) narrative, Walrod (1977) reports that while one/seven is the general ratio of verb to nonverb in his folklore material, one/three is the ratio at peak — where verb tumbles along after verb in rapid sequence. Such a development can also lead to a phasing-out of dialogue in favor of action at a peak; this is somewhat contrary to the use of dialogue (previously unused in a story) to mark peak (as described below).

The packing of the event-line can also take the form of reporting nonevents on the event-line as if they were events. This is true, e.g., of the peak of the Hebrew text of the Genesis flood narrative (Gen. 7: 17–24). Here the paraphrase of an event (such as 'the mountains were covered' or 'everything died' is reported as a preterite — as if it were a new event. Elsewhere (cf., e.g., the whole book of Ruth), the paraphrase of an event is reported off the line as a perfect instead of as a preterite (Longacre, 1979b).

Another basic device used to mark peak in narrative discourse is the _crowded stage_. In drama, a literal crowding of the stage usually characterizes the peak. In nondramatic narrative, there is often a similar concentration of participants at peak. Compare, e.g., the second trial of Charles Darnay in _The Tale of Two Cities_ (Dickens). The question can also be raised here as to whether a concentrated interweaving of themes in expository discourse constitutes a nonnarrative peak-marking device which parallels the concentration of participants as a peak-marking device in narrative.

In addition to the basic narrative devices of the packed event-line and the crowded stage (with their possible nonnarrative counterparts), there are some more specialized devices which involve shifts along several surface-structure parameters. One such shift is to a higher person-number category on the agency hierarchy, e.g., a shift from third person to first person plural (from

'he' and 'they' to 'we'), or from third person to second person (when the narrator addresses a participant in the story). Shifts of tense also occur (e.g., past to historical present); some such shifts are discussed in 2.3 below. There may also be a shift along a parameter with four values; narrative, pseudodialogue, dialogue, drama. Clearly, if a story has had little or no dialogue in prepeak, a shift to dialogue can serve to mark the peak. Pseudodialogue includes apostrophe and rhetorical questions, which liven up narrative and resemble dialogue but do not evoke answers. By 'drama' I indicate dialogue without the use of quotation formulas. Thus a story which has employed dialogue freely in prepeak episodes can (by dropping the formulas of quotation) shift into drama at peak. There may also be change of sentence length at peak. Sentences of a normal length which the hearer/reader has learned to associate with a given speaker/writer can give way at peak to either (a) short crisp sentences or (b) long rolling sentences. There may also be increased use of onomatopoeia (or in some texts profanity and obscenity) at the peak of a story.

2.3. Peaks also emerge as points of typical analytical difficulty in the linguistic analysis of texts. If one is beginning the study of the narrative spectrum in a body of texts in a given language, the peak is the worst of all places to begin such a study. Conversely, if one has begun to understand the uses of various forms in the narrative spectrum, the analysis of the peak of a story can on first impression seem to uncover features which run counter to the analysis.

The reason for the above analytical difficulties is simply that spectral lines can shift at peak, so that the various verb forms that regularly mark differing sorts of information can occur in a distribution other than would be anticipated from previous parts of the narrative. Any other features that contribute to the distinction between spectral lines can likewise suffer shift. Or to change the metaphor, peak is a zone of turbulence in the otherwise placid flow of discourse.

A Totonac folktale (in Reid, et al., 1968) illustrates well some of the rather unusual things that can happen at peak. The story 'When our God walked on earth' pictures God going about in human form, pretending to be a simple laborer, and humbling the proud. In one incident of the story, he comes to a blacksmith shop where a sign has been posted to the effect that no one can shoe horses as well and as rapidly as this blacksmith. The (presumed) laborer asks for work and proceeds to shoe horses by cutting off a lower leg, putting on the horseshoe, and then sticking the leg back on the horse — all without

spilling a drop of blood. After working half a day the laborer gets his noonday meal and wages, then leaves. At this point the following paragraph (Example 3), which is notional climax encoding as peak, occurs (I present the paragraph in Totonac with verb forms identified in parentheses in the matching translation: PRES=present, PRPR=present progressive, IMPF=imperfect, PAPR=past progressive, FUT=future, PAPF=past perfect, PRET=preterite, PAPR=past progressive, FUT=future, PRPF=present perfect, INJ=injunctive, and CONT=contrafactual):

Example 3 (from Reid, et al., 1968: 140)

(1) Lā'i a'xni'ca'tza$_2$ i'xa nī'ttza'$_3$, tuncan$_4$ nā$_5$ xla'$_6$ macacā'tēl$_7$, nā$_8$ lakati n$_9$ cahuayujo. (2) Lā'i tuncan$_2$ tzucul h$_3$ sta jni'$_4$ i'xka'lhni'$_5$ hui'lini'ko'lh$_{10}$ i'xmacalīca'n$_{11}$, huan$_{12}$ cahuayuj$_{13}$. (3) Lā'i como$_2$ laktzī'i$_3$ que lēj$_5$ i'sta jmā'$_6$ i'xka lhni'$_7$, lēj$_8$ lacapali$_9$ juani'cu'tulh$_3$ i'xmacan$_4$; tūlalhīza'$_5$ yāhuani'lh$_6$. (5) Lā'i tuncan$_2$ tiyā- tiyāhuani'cu'tulh$_4$ i'xmacan$_5$ lā'$_6$ tūlalhtza'$_7$ yāhuani'lh$_8$ i'xmacanī'n$_9$ huan$_{10}$ cahuayuj$_{11}$. (6) Lā'i tantu$_2$ tilali$_3$, pero$_4$ por$_5$ masqui$_6$ i'xpuhuan$_7$ a'nchi$_8$ i'xlicāyāhuani'lh$_9$ i'xmacanī'n$_{10}$ lā'$_{11}$ tūlalhtza$_{12}$ cāyāhuani'lh$_{13}$. (7) Tuncan$_1$ a'lh$_2$ māputzanīni'n$_3$ huan$_4$ chi'xcu'$_5$ a'nī$_{14}$ a'xni'ca'$_{15}$ i'xmacacā'lē$_{16}$ lā'$_{17}$ como$_{18}$ xla'$_{19}$ tū'$_{20}$ ī'staja$_{21}$ i'xka lhni'$_{22}$ huan$_{23}$ cahuayuj$_{24}$.

31. (1) And$_1$ when$_2$ he had gone-PAPF$_3$, then$_4$ he$_6$ also$_5$ cut off the forefoot of:PRET$_7$ a$_9$ horse$_{10}$ also$_8$. (2) And$_1$ then$_2$ his blood$_5$ began-PRET$_3$ to flow-PRES$_4$. (3) And$_1$ since$_2$ he saw-PRET$_3$ that$_4$ his blood$_7$ was flowing-PAPR$_6$ very much$_5$, very$_8$ quickly$_9$ he finished putting on-PRET$_{10}$ the shoe of$_{11}$ the$_{12}$ horse$_{13}$. (4) And$_1$ then$_2$ he tried to put on-PRET$_3$ his forefoot$_4$; he could not-PRET$_5$ put it on-PRET$_6$. (5) And$_1$ so much$_2$ he tried-PRET$_3$ to put on-PRET$_4$ his forefoot$_5$ and$_6$ he could not-PRET$_7$ put on-PRET$_8$ the forefoot of$_9$ the$_{10}$ horse$_{11}$. (6) And$_1$ so much$_2$ he tried-PRET$_3$ but$_4$ although$_5$,$_6$ he thought about$_7$ how$_8$ he would put on-CONT$_9$ its forefeet$_{10}$ (and) yet$_{11}$ he could not-PRET$_{12}$ put them on-PRET$_{13}$. (7) Then$_1$ he went-PRET$_2$ to look for-PRET$_3$ the$_4$ mans who$_6$ had passed by to show him- self$_{5,6}$ how$_8$ IMPF-he cut the feet of$_9$ the$_{10}$ horse$_{11}$ and$_{12}$ how$_{13}$ he$_{14}$ when$_{15}$ IMPF-he cut off the feet$_{16}$ and$_{17}$ as for$_{18}$ him$_{19}$ the blood of$_{22}$ the$_{23}$ horse$_{24}$ IMPF-did not flow$_{20,21}$.

This paragraph starts off in a fairly routine way with a back reference verb in the past perfect (1$_3$), and following event-line preterites (1$_7$, 2$_3$, and 3$_{10}$). The first two preterites are preceded by tuncan 'and then', which as we saw in 1.3.3 and in Figure 3 marks pivotal events: the cutting off of the horse's leg, and the immediate flow of blood. A dependent predicate (3$_3$) is lower in cline or spectrum than either the independent preterites or the preterites reinforced with a preceding tuncan. Words 2 and 3 of sentence (1) each occur with a suffixed tza' which tags especially crucial (but non-event-line) information: 'And when-tza' he had gone-tza' . . .' So far the uses of tenses in the paragraph are quite routine – although we are warned that the departure of the miracle-working laborer is a fateful event!

With sentence (4), however, things take a different turn – and this is reflected in the structure of the verbs in this and the following sentences. The sentence starts with lā' tuncan 'and then', which is customarily used to mark pivotal events. But word 3 of this sentence is a preterite with ti- 'in vain', and word 5 is a preterite prefixed with tū- 'negative'. The sentence can be rendered 'and then he tried (in vain) to put its forefoot back on, but he couldn't put it on'. It is striking here that tuncan, which usually marks pivotal preterites, here occurs with preterites which are compromised by the occurrence of the ti- and tū- prefixes and are low on the spectrum. Sentence (5) is not too different: 'No matter how much he tried to put the leg back on he couldn't put on the forefoot of the horse' – with the same recurrence of ti- and tū-marked verbs. And so also sentence (6), which mainly adds the thought that no matter how much he tried to figure out how to do it, he just couldn't. Obviously, the story is not moving forward here: we are stuck with the black-smith in his moment of truth. Furthermore, the high incidence of low-level compromised predicates (Grimes' collateral information), along with the rather unusual use of tuncan with such verbs in sentence (5), points to some-thing special. Note, in addition, that (4$_5$), (5$_7$), and (6$_{12}$) – all instances of the verb 'he couldn't' – are suffixed with tza', which is indicative of important supportive material. Note finally the repetition of the word for 'forefoot' – the crucial prop – in sentences (4)-(6). Clearly this paragraph is the peak (climax) of the embedded blacksmith narrative. The story is brought to a close with the blacksmith going to seek his employee of the morning and getting him to fix up the horse for him. The blacksmith narrative ends with a didactic peak in which 'Our God' (the laborer) gives the blacksmith a lecture on humility.

This story is followed by another embedded narrative in which 'Our God'

incognito finds a baker who has posted a sign 'There isn't another breadmaker like me.' Again the laborer asks for work and again he outdoes his employer in the quantity and quality of work (baked goods) which he produces. Finally, toward the end of the day, the laborer picked up an old woman, put her on the baking board, and slipped her into the (large, beehive) oven. After a short while he took her out and she had become the most beautiful woman in town. Then the laborer took his wages and left.

The baker, whose wife was somewhat old and haggard, decided to try the same procedure upon her. But the results were rather disastrous — at which point we pick up the Totonac text:

Example 4 (from Reid, et. al., 1968:145-146)

44. (1) Lā'$_1$ como$_2$ xlīti$_3$ mānūlh$_4$, lā'$_5$ a'xni'ca'$_6$ i'xmāxtu$_7$, con$_8$ huan$_9$ i'xpūmāxtucan$_{10}$ huan$_{11}$ lātasna'$_{12}$ de$_{13}$ pāntzi$_{14}$ lā'$_{15}$ i'xmākosū$_{16}$ lā'$_{17}$ a'nlhā$_{18}$ i'xmacachā'n$_{19}$ tapok$_{20}$ i'xmacachā'n$_{21}$ puro$_{22}$ lhca'ca'n$_{23}$ i'xmacachā'n$_{24}$.

44. (1) And$_1$ since$_2$ for a long time$_3$ he put her in (PRET)$_4$ and$_5$ when$_6$ he took her out (IMPF)$_7$ with$_8$ the$_9$ thing with which he took out$_{10}$ the$_{11}$ pans$_{12}$ of$_{13}$ bread$_{14}$, and$_{15}$ he threw her/it (IMPF)$_{16}$ and$_{17}$ where$_{18}$ (the) powder$_{20}$ landed (IMPF)$_{19}$ nothing but$_{22}$ ashes$_{23}$ landed (IMPF)$_{21,24}$.

45. (1) Lā'$_1$ tuncan$_2$ i'xa'mpala$_3$ ī'saca$_4$ lējs lacapalh$_6$. (2) Lā'$_1$ tuncan$_2$ i'xtamacanūpala$_3$; ka'tlā'tusi$_4$ i'xka'lhīpala$_5$. (3) Tuncan$_1$ i'xmāxtupala$_2$ lā'$_3$ chu$_4$ i'xmākosūpala$_5$. (4) Lā'$_1$ a'xni'ca'$_2$ i'xchā'mpala$_3$ a'nlhā$_4$ i'xma- cachā'n$_5$ tapok$_6$, i'xchā'mpala$_7$ puro$_8$ lhca'ca'n$_9$. (5) Lā'$_1$ tuncan$_2$ i'xa'mpala$_3$ ī'saca$_4$ lējs lacapalh$_6$. (6) Lā'$_1$ tuncan$_2$ i'xtamacanūpala$_3$ na$_4$ i'xpupāntzis lā'$_6$ ka'tlā'tusi$_7$ i'xka'lhīpala$_8$. (7) Chu$_1$ tuncan$_2$ i'xmāxtupala$_3$ lā'$_4$ i'xmākosū- pala$_5$. (8) Lā'$_1$ a'nlhā$_2$ i'xmacachā'mpala$_3$ a'xni'ca'$_4$ i'xmākosūpala$_5$ tapok$_6$, i'xchā'n$_7$ x'mān$_8$ lhca'ca'n$_9$, i'xlani'ni'pala$_{10}$. (9) Lā'$_1$ tū'$_2$ maktin$_3$ cāxtlōlh$_4$; de$_5$ tantu$_6$ i'xtlahuacu'tun$_7$ a'nchī$_8$ i'xmāsu'ni'cani'$_9$, hasta$_{10}$ que$_{11}$ mejor$_{12}$ a'lh$_{13}$ putzatakchoko$_{14}$ huan$_{15}$ chi'xcu'$_{16}$ a'ntī$_{17}$ temāsu'ni'lh$_{18}$ huanmā'$_{19}$ a'nchī$_{20}$ i'xcāxlōnī'n$_{21}$ huan$_{22}$ to'kotzīn$_{23}$. (10) Lā'$_1$ de$_2$ tantu$_3$ i'xputzatlā'- huan$_4$, hasta$_5$ que$_6$ quīkaksli$_7$ huan$_8$ chi'xcu'$_9$ a'nlhā$_{10}$ i'xlatlā'huanachā'n.

a long while$_4$. (3) Then$_1$ he took it out again (IMPF)$_2$ and$_3$ he threw it again (IMPF)$_{4,5}$. (4) And$_1$ when$_2$ it landed (IMPF)$_3$ where$_4$ (the) powder$_6$ landed (IMPF)$_5$, nothing but$_8$ ashes$_9$ landed (IMPF)$_7$. (5) And$_1$ then$_2$ he went again (IMPF)$_3$ very$_5$ rapidly$_6$ to pick it up (IMPF)$_4$. (6) And$_1$ then$_2$ he put it in again (IMPF)$_3$ into$_4$ his oven$_5$ and$_6$ he waited again (IMPF)$_8$ a long while$_7$. So$_1$ then$_2$ he took it out again (IMPF)$_3$ and$_4$ he threw it again (IMPF)$_5$. (8) And$_1$ where$_2$ it arrived again (IMPF)$_3$ when$_4$ he threw again (IMPF)$_5$ (the) powder$_6$ only$_8$ ashes$_9$ arrived (IMPF)$_7$; it happened to him again (IMPF)$_{10}$. (9) And$_1$ he never fixed her (PRET)$_{3-4}$; although so very much$_{5,6}$ he wanted to do (IMPF)$_7$ as$_8$ he had been shown (PAPF)$_9$, in the end$_{10,11}$ (he thought) better$_{12}$ he should go (PRET)$_{13}$ look for (PRES)$_{14}$ the$_{15}$ man$_{16}$ who$_{17}$ had taught him (PRET)$_{18}$ this$_{19}$ how$_{20}$ he had fixed up (PAPF)$_{21}$ the$_{22}$ old woman$_{23}$. (10) And$_1$ so much$_{2,3}$ he walked looking for him (IMPF)$_4$, in the end$_{5,6}$ he went and found (PRET)$_7$ the$_8$ man$_9$ where$_{10}$ he was walking around (IMPF)$_{11}$.

The first paragraph (number 44 of the entire story) pictures the baker's initial frustration: when he draws his wife out of the oven and tosses her (like one would toss a lot of newly baked bread into a basket) all that lands there is a heap of powder and ashes! The main verb here (word 19) and its repetitions (words 21 and 24) are imperfects, i.e., the usual background tense is used rather than an event-line preterite.

Similarly the baker's repeated attempts and repeated frustrations are pictured in paragraph 45 as an unbroken series of nineteen imperfects in sentences (1)–(8). None of the verbs are marked with ti- and tū- as in the peak of the preceding story (where the blacksmith can't do what he tries to do); rather, the imperfects picture a repeated and fruitless round of activity — an impression which is reinforced by the occurrence of -pala 'again', 'another time', 15 times in the paragraph. Again, we are at the peak, the point of maxi- mum tension of the story. And again, the verbs don't act 'properly'. Event- line preterites disappear; the background tense (imperfect) takes over; and furthermore tuncan 'and then' occurs with considerable frequency with the imperfect, in sentences (1), (2), (3), (5), (6), and (7). In effect here, nonevents (or at the best fruitless activity) are labeled as if they were pivotal. We have here another instance of a pseudo-event-line as pointed out for the peak of the flood story in Hebrew.

This story is brought to a close by the baker's going to seek the man who had worked for him. Once the baker finds him and gets him to return to the

bakery, 'Our God' puts the pile of ashes into the oven and brings out the man's wife alive and well – but twice as ugly as before.

2.4. Once we are able to isolate one or more peaks in a discourse, we can then plot the profile of a discourse in terms of mounting tension toward the peak and loosening tension away from it. Since peak is a *zone* encountered in the discourse, we do not necessarily find peak-marking features beginning exactly at the onset of the episode that is so marked and phasing out exactly at its close. Rather, we find that episodes which are immediately contiguous to a peak may partially share in the peak-marking features. Numbering episodes back from the peak and forward from it, as in Figure 6, we can hold open the possibility that the concluding part of P − 1 and/or the beginning of P + 1 may share peak-marking features.
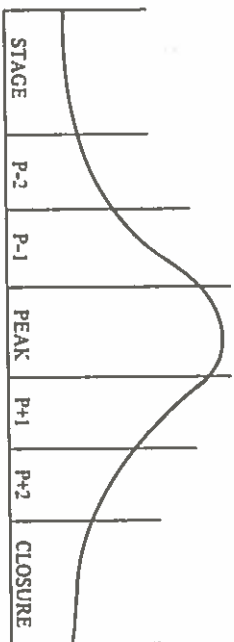


Figure 6. *Profile of a one-Peak discourse*

Looking again at Figure 6, we note that this is offered as the surface-structure morphology of a story. There are beginning and closing sections; and there are sections which precede and follow the central section. It is roughly analogous to a clause of SVO structure where the verb is the acknowledged central segment and the subject and object are distributed around it. Many narratives, and many discourses of other types, frequently have a profile of this sort. The two chief variations on this pattern are: (1) discourses in which peak is final, with no P + 1 and a very rudimentary (or absent) closure: (2) discourses in which the inciting incident of a story also has peaklike features. The latter gives a profile with a low rise and fall following the stage, then the major buildup to and from peak (cf. Konzime narrative discourse, Beavon, 1979).

Another sort of profile is that in which there is an action peak followed by a secondary didactic peak, as sketched in Figure 7 (closure may be merged with the didactic peak or can occur as a separate segment). This is the struc-

ture of the Genesis flood story, except that there are three prepeak episodes, and four postpeak episodes which precede the secondary peak.
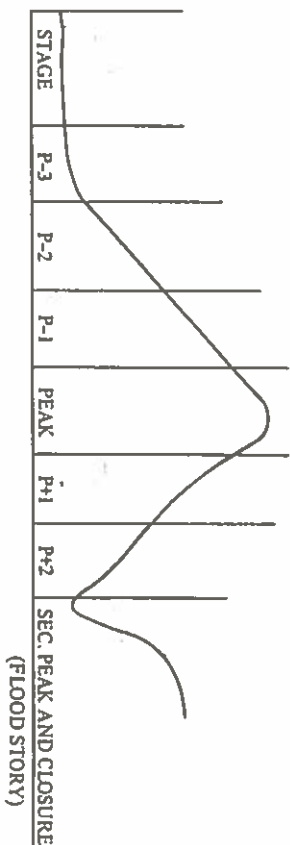


Figure 7. *Profile with a main Peak and final (didactic) Peak*

When both climax and denouement are marked as peaks, we get a structure like that symbolized in Figure 8. This is, roughly, the structure of the Joseph story in the book of Genesis. There are four prepeak episodes, beginning with the sale of Joseph into Egypt. In Gen. 41 we have the first action peak (climax), in which Joseph's rise to power is portrayed as a rapidly moving event-line which brackets both sides of his dialogue with Pharaoh.[1] The second action peak (denouement) (Gen. 43–45) records the second visit of Joseph's brothers to Egypt, his hazing and testing them, Judah's impassioned speech in defense of Benjamin, and Joseph's revelation of himself. There are an interpeak episode (Gen. 42), which maintains a rather consistently high level of excitement and suspense, and three postpeak episodes.
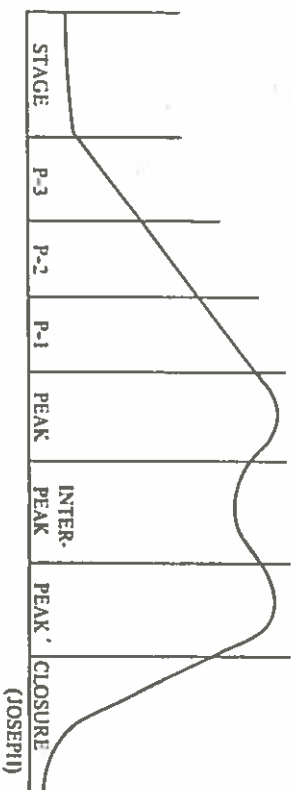


Figure 8. *Profile with double Peak*

Figures 6, 7, and 8 and the schemata that they portray are plausible constructs, if we recognize the importance of the surface-structure peak(s) in a discourse. When we keep in mind that the peak(s) also affect the spectral lines of the discourse and a number of other features as well, it is evident that much of the detail of a story — down to its morphosyntax, systems of nominal/pronominal reference, and linkage — can be explained relative to the twin concerns of spectrum and profile. They, of course, are not the whole analysis; we must also add further concerns, especially constituency analysis and macrostructure analysis — but these latter concerns are beyond the scope of this article.

## Note

1. An interesting question emerges here: would it not be possible to suspend action midway in an action peak and run in a didactic discourse at that point, so that, in effect, an action peak and a didactic peak would be combined? There seems to be no good reason why this could not happen. This may in fact be what happens in the first peak of the Joseph story, i.e., the section of the story in which Joseph vaults from prison to be overlord of Egypt. Joseph's being called from prison, readied, and presented to Pharaoh is presented in a series of fast-moving event-line clauses — as is also the recital of the things which Pharaoh says and does to Joseph in installing him as grand vizier. In these respects the passage patterns as a typical action peak. But in between the two stretches of rapid-fire preterites comes Joseph's dialogue with Pharaoh and his interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams. The emphasis on divine providence in Joseph's speech would correlate well with the general idea of a didactic peak.

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educational background of the native speakers, and the amount of exposure they have had both to foreign languages and to foreigners. However, the list is long and varied enough to tell us that the perception of errors by native speakers is very complex and will need a considerable amount of careful research before the results can be applied to the teaching of foreign languages.

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# VERB RANKING AND THE CONSTITUENT STRUCTURE OF DISCOURSE

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INTRODUCTION. During the past decade the study of units above the sentence has come increasingly to the fore as a contemporary linguistic concern. Inevitably, however, dis-course analysis or textlinguistics has evolved into an inter-disciplinary study. In this development of textlinguistics into text theory, the linguistic developments run a risk of being overlooked in a welter of contributions from other disciplines--as welcome as are those contributions. The position of this paper is that, while not ignoring the con-tributions of other disciplines, textlinguistics need to continue to develop as a branch of linguistics.

Gleason, Grimes, and others have emphasized the impor-tance of separating the mainline of a discourse from sup-portive and elaborative materials. A series of recent studies, while confirming this, show that this distinction is but the visible tip of a rather substantial iceberg. Actually, the entire verbal system of a language needs to be evaluated as to what part each tense/aspect/mood of the verb plays in discourses of varying type. In this fashion an explanation of the verb system is possible. Such studies have been made for several Mesoamerican languages (Jones 1979), Halbi (Woods 1979), Salt-yui (Irwin 1980), and Korean (Hwang 1981).

In this paper the tense/aspects/moods of the verb in Biblical Hebrew are ranked in reference to narrative dis-course on a scale from the most dynamic (the preterite, i.e. the waw-consecutive plus the imperfect) to the most static (the nominal clause which has no verb at all). Their similar but slightly different rank schemes are proposed for predic-tive/procedural discourse and for hortatory discourse. Ex-pository discourse is shown to have a rank scheme that is the inverse of narrative so that the most static forms rank the highest.

All of this can now be related to the constituent structure of discourse. Assuming that paragraphs (as struc-tural rather than orthographic-indentation units) are the fundamental building blocks of discourse, we first of all must identify every paragraph as N (narrative), P (predic-tive/procedural), H (hortatory), or E (expository)--with the recursive nature of paragraph structure allowing, e.g., that a short expository paragraph can embed within a narrative paragraph. When a paragraph has been classified as to type, its internal structure can then be analyzed in accordance with the rank scheme which is posited for that type. Sen-tences whose main verbs rank high in the rank scheme will be

are completely static, represent background situations.

These concerns are represented in Diagram 1, where the preterite at the upper left of the chart is the most dynamic form of the verb and the nominal clauses at the lower-right-hand corner are the most static, while in between space clauses with perfects, participles, and 'be' clauses.

This scheme of verb rank can be applied to a narrative discourse in Hebrew so as to sort out clauses in regard to relative salience. Thus, we can trace the event-line of a story and various degrees of departures from that line. We can also note the participant slate of a narrative discourse and note the lines of participant reference. While this other consideration is largely beyond the scope of this paper, it is necessary, however, to take account of the inter-section of participant reference with certain concerns of verb rank. It is necessary, e.g., to depart from the event-line proper of a narrative discourse in order to present an event not simply as an event but as an event specifically related to a participant or prop.

The role of verbs of differing rank can best be seen, however, in relation to the constituent structure of a dis-course. Here we deal with sentence and paragraph in Biblical Hebrew. It is assumed here that a Hebrew sentence consists of one main clause plus or minus relative clauses and/or adverbial clauses, with the following further sentence-forming devices: (1) two closely related clauses (e.g. with the second a chiastic paraphrase of the first) may be jux-taposed without conjunction; (2) wayehi 'and-it-was/evented-that' or wehaya 'and-it-will-be/event-that' may be used with a non 'be' verb as its complement. Typical beginners of new sentences are the conjunctions wǝ- 'and' and wayehi + a tem-poral expression.

The paragraph is assumed to be a level of organization intermediate between sentence and discourse. In narrative, it is a chain of preterites which may be introduced, inter-rupted, or closed by nonpreterites. It is built around a thematic participant which typically is mentioned several times in the paragraph--often at beginning and end. Notion verbs are used in narrative paragraphs to shift the location of participants (on or off the stage) at the beginning and/or end of the paragraph.

Each sentence fills its slot in the overall structure, which will not necessarily be a simple sequence of sentences, but more likely than not will prove to be a nested structure with one or more embedded paragraphs. Sentences are not cut up to fill more than one paragraph-level slot; rather their integrity and wholeness is respected in the analysis.

Granted then these definitions of sentence and para-graph as well as the interrelations between them, one can now set out to confront the system of verb rank which has been posited for Hebrew with its paragraph structure. In so doing, (1) we assume that the more salient parts of a

paragraph are verbs with higher narrative rank; (2) we will have recourse to a system of taxonomy based on the study of paragraphs in English and in certain languages of Mesoamerica, Philippines, Papua New Guinea, and South America in reference to labelling paragraph types and slots within paragraphs; (3) we will match the paragraph taxonomy to the verb rank; and (4) we will (we hope) obtain thereby a description of the paragraph (as the organizational unit of discourse) in which considerations of verb morphology are firmly tied into con-cerns of discourse structure.

I will sample certain types of narrative paragraphs, then proceed in subsequent sections of this paper to present comparable paragraphs from other discourse types. It is assumed here that a given paragraph type is recognizable across discourse types but that each discourse type deter-mines variants of the paragraph types. I describe here Narrative Sequence, Narrative Reason/Result, and Narrative Antithetical paragraphs. I will proceed in subsequent sec-tions to exemplify Predictive Sequence, Predictive Reason/Result, and Predictive Antithetical paragraphs, then Hortatory variants of the same, and finally, Expository variants of these types where such exist. (We do not, e.g. have an Expository Sequence paragraph, since Expository discourse is static and does not deal with temporal se-quences.)

1.1. The Narrative Sequence Paragraph. Consider a very simple example, such as is found in Genesis 37:5.

Example 1:

BU₁: $wayya\d{h}\check{o}l\bar{o}m_1$ $y\bar{o}s\bar{e}p_2$ $\d{h}\check{o}l\bar{o}m_3$.

BU₂: $wayya\underline{g}\underline{g}ed_4$ $l\partial'e\d{h}\bar{a}yw_2$.

BUₙ: $wayy\bar{o}sip\bar{u}_5$ $'\bar{o}\underline{d}_6$ $\acute{s}\partial n\bar{o}'_7$ $'\bar{o}\underline{t}\bar{o}_8$.

BU₁: 'And he dreamed₁ Joseph₂ (a) dream₃.'

BU₂: 'And he declared (it)₄ to his brothers₂.'

BUₙ: 'And they added₅ yet₆ to hate₇ him₈.'

Here the structure is uncomplicated by off-the-line elements or by embedding. BU here signifies Build-up and is a neutral term for events/predicted events/commanded events in sequence. Here the temporal narrative succession is simply: 'And Joseph dreamed a dream. And he declared it to his brothers. And he declared a dream.'

2) bypass here a further problem: occasionally two verbs of equal rank seem to be semantically ordered, so that e.g., given two preterites, one a motion verb and the second an action verb, the latter seems to outrank the former. These and other sorts of semantic qualifications to verb rank are considered in my forthcoming work: A Textlinguistic Analysis of 'Joseph'.

and Terminus) have clauses of lower rank, e.g. nominal clauses whose verb is perfect. The last example indicates recursive embedding of a Narrative Sequence paragraph within a Narrative Antithetical paragraph whose Antithesis is considered to be off the story-line.

1.2. _Narrative Reason and Result Paragraphs._ In the course of telling a story, a cause or reason may be cited relative to an event; here we expect to see the event on the story-line and the cause or reason off the line. Conversely, an event may be expressed on the line and its result off the line. Verb ranking reflects which structure is implemented at a given place in the story.

Consider Example 4 (Genesis 43:32).

Example 4:

TEXT: wayyāśîmû$_1$ lô$_2$ lēbaddô$_3$ wəlahem$_4$ lēbaddām$_5$ wəlammiṣrîm$_6$ hāʔōkəlîm$_7$ ʔittô$_8$ ləbaddām$_9$.

REASON: kî$_1$ lōʔ$_2$ yûkəlûn$_3$ hammiṣrîm$_4$ leʔĕkōl$_5$ ʔet-hāʕibrîm$_6$ leḥem$_7$ kî$_8$ tôʕēbāh$_9$ hîwʔ$_{10}$ ləmiṣrāyim$_{11}$.

TEXT: 'And they set (the meal)$_1$ for him$_2$ by himself$_3$ and for them$_4$ by themselves$_5$ and for the Egyptians$_6$ the ones eating$_7$ with him$_8$ by themselves$_9$.'

REASON: 'For$_1$ not$_2$ are able$_3$ the Egyptians$_4$ to eat$_5$ with the Hebrews$_6$ bread$_7$, for$_8$ that$_{10}$ is an abomination$_9$ to the Egyptians$_{11}$.'

Notice here that the Text has a verb in the preterite and is on the event-line of the story. The Reason (or explanation) involves an imperfect used in a present (gnomic) sense to state a general maxim. The imperfect is quite rare in narrative discourse and plainly appears to pattern here as an explanatory comment of the narrator. As such it is off the line of the story and is, in fact, at the bottom of our rank scheme for narrative.

Consider now Example 5 (Genesis 37:4) where the disposing cause is the event (Text) which is reported on the line and the Result is off the line.

Example 5:

TEXT: wayyīśnəʔû$_1$ ʔōtô$_2$.

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RESULT: wəlōʔ$_1$ yākəlû$_2$ dabbərô$_3$ ləšālōm$_4$.

TEXT: 'And they hated$_1$ him$_2$.'

RESULT: 'And not$_1$ were able they$_2$ to speak to him$_3$ decently$_4$.'

Here the Text has a verb in the preterite, while the Result has a stative perfect.

An interesting example (Genesis 37:3) of a Reason paragraph occurs in the context of the example just given. In this example, Example 6, the whole Narrative Reason paragraph is embedded in the Setting of a larger unit. In keeping with its function in Setting both verbs in the Reason paragraph are reduced from preterites to perfects. Verb rank is still observable, however, in that a Noun + perfect clause is outranked by a clause with an initial perfect. l, therefore, assume the former to be the Reason and the latter to be the Text.

Example 6:

REASON: wəyiśrāʔēl$_1$ ʔāhab$_2$ ʔet-yôsēp$_3$ mikkol$_4$ bānāyw$_5$ kî-ben -zəqunîm$_6$ hûʔ$_7$ lô$_8$.

TEXT: wəʕāśâ$_1$ lô$_2$ kətōnet passîm$_3$.

REASON: 'And Israel$_1$ loved$_2$ Joseph$_3$ more than all$_4$ his sons$_5$ because a son of old age$_6$ he$_7$ (was) to him$_8$.'

TEXT: 'And he made$_1$ him$_2$ a "special" cloak$_3$.'

1.3. _The Narrative Antithetical Paragraph._ This paragraph type expresses notional contrast or expectancy reversal. In two-sentence sequences which constitute this paragraph type, the verbs are often of equal rank, as in Example 7 (Genesis 37:35).

Example 7:

THESIS: wayyāqumû$_1$ kol-bānāyw$_2$ wəkol$_3$ bənōtāyw$_4$ lənaḥămô$_5$

ANTI: wayəmāʔēn$_1$ ləhitnaḥēm$_2$

THESIS: 'And they arose$_1$ all his sons$_2$ and all$_3$ his daughters$_4$ to comfort him$_5$.'

ANTI: 'And he refused$_1$ to be comforted$_2$.'
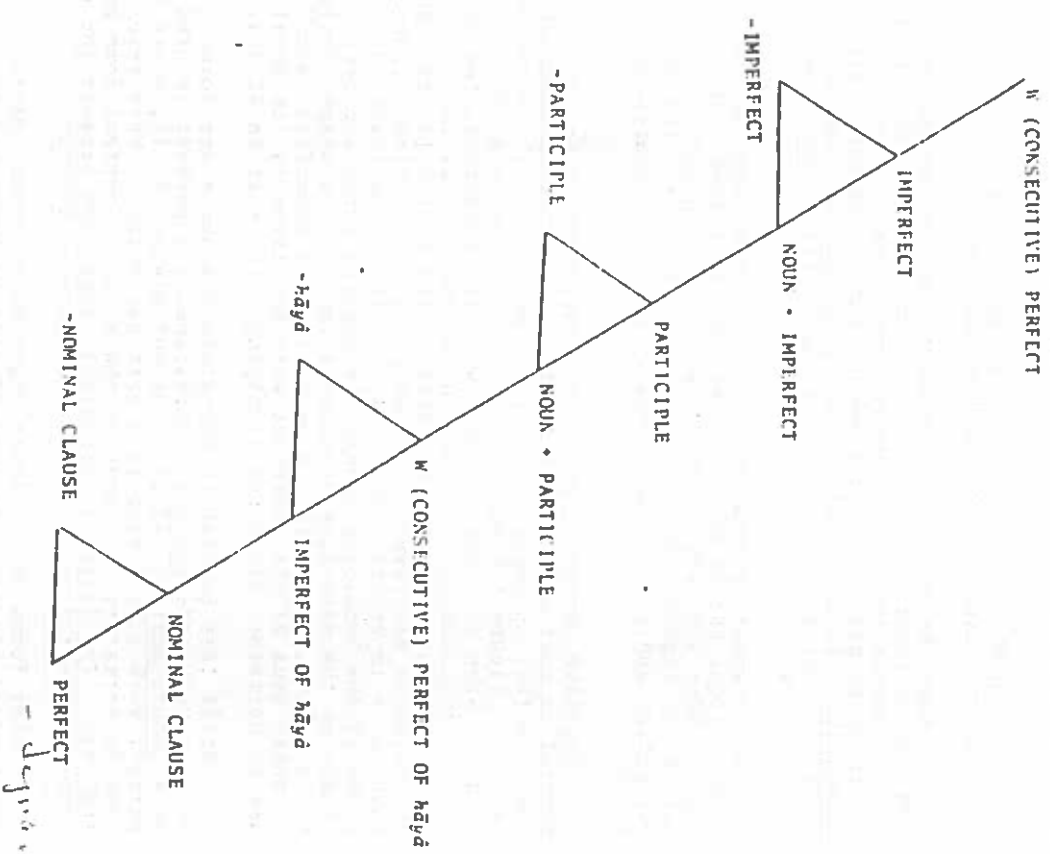
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of verb rank can be applied to guide the analysis of the constituents of the paragraph.

2.1. The Predictive Sequence Paragraph. Such a paragraph is found in Example 11 (Genesis 40:13).

### Example 11:

SETTING: be'ōḏ₁ šelōšeṯ₂ yāmim₃ yiśśā₄ par'ōh₅, .·ēṯ-rō'šeḵā₆,

BU₁: wăhăšibăḵā₁ 'al-kannekā₂

BUₙ: wěnăḏattā₁ kōs₂-par'ōn běyāḏō₄ kammišpāṭ₅ harī'sōn₆ 'ăšer₇ hăyīṯā₈ mašqēhū₉

SETTING: 'In just₁ three₂ days₃ he will lift up₄ Pharaoh₅ your head₆.'

BU₁: 'And he will put you₁ on your pedestal₂;'

BUₙ: 'And you will give₁ the cup of₂ Pharaoh₃ into his hand₄, according to the former₅ custom₆ which₇ you were₈ his cupbearer₉.'

Note that the Setting, which is peripheral to the body of the paragraph has a verb that is an imperfect: yiśśā, 'he-will-lift-up'. The whole clause 'in yet three days Pharaoh will lift up your head' is preparatory to the following predicted events which are given in BU₁ and BUₙ as w (cons) perfect clauses:

'And he will put you on your pedestal.'

'And you will give the cup of Pharaoh into his hand according to the the former custom

which you were his cupbearer.'

2.2. Predictive Reason Paragraphs. Two Predictive Reason paragraphs are found in Genesis 41:39-45 where Pharaoh installs Joseph as grand visier of Egypt. In 41:39-40, a complicated structure occurs in the Text (a Predictive Anti-thetical paragraph whose Thesis embeds a Predictive Coordin-ate paragraph.[3] But for our purposes here it is sufficient to note (a) the Reason is a negated participial clause ('no

[3] Coordinate paragraphs in Hebrew and in other languages simple couple certain sentences without implying further logical or temporal organ-ization. In Hebrew such coordinate paragraphs, when composed of two sentences, frequently have gam 'also' associated with the verb in the second sentence.
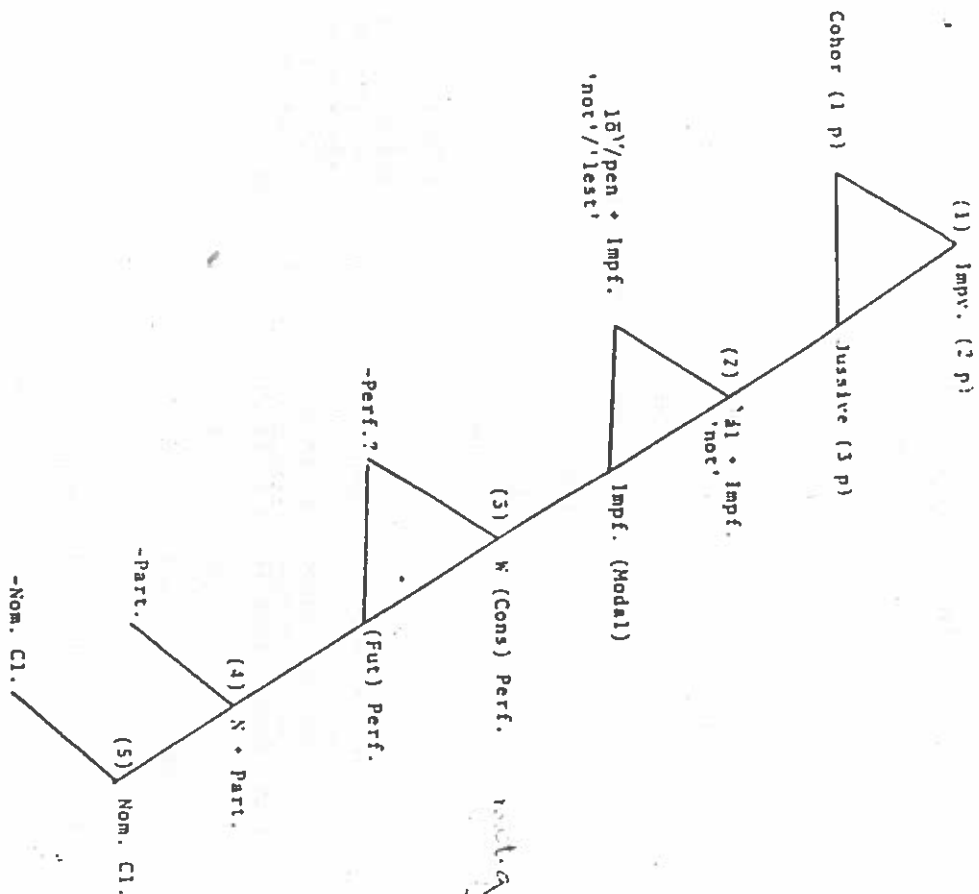
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Diagram (Diagram 2 – Predictive) labels:

w (CONSECUTIVE) PERFECT

IMPERFECT

-IMPERFECT

NOUN + IMPERFECT

PARTICIPLE

-PARTICIPLE

NOUN + PARTICIPLE

w (CONSECUTIVE) PERFECT OF hāyā

-hāyā

IMPERFECT OF hāyā

NOMINAL CLAUSE

-NOMINAL CLAUSE

PERFECT

DIAGRAM 2 – Predictive Paragraphs

Diagram 3 – Ho:lada:...

Cohor (1 p)

(1) Impv. (2 p)

Jussive (3 p)

lō'/pen + Impf. 'not'/'lest'

(2) 'al + Impf. 'not'

Impf. (Modal)

(3) w (Cons) Perf.

-Perf.?

(Fut) Perf.

(4) N + Part.

-Part.

(5) Nom. Cl.

Nom. Cl.

Notes: A. lō + Impf. strengthens (2) and raises it at least to (1). (Cf. Decalogue)

B. (3) may substitute for (1). Equals either mitigated (H) DISC or substitution of (P) DISC.

C. Jussive may substitute for Impv. (avoidance of 2 p).

means whereby a command can be strengthened or mitigated. Thus, lō' 'not' plus the imperfect is in most colloquial varieties of hortatory discourse off the line of exhortation entirely. But this construction can be strengthened to an absolute prohibition as in the negative commands of the Decalogue (special discourse genre: law-code?). On the other hand two ways exist to mitigate a discourse: (a) by substituting w (cons) perfect for the command forms; and (b) by shifting to third person (as in addressing a monarch) so that imperatives are replaced by jussives (Genesis 41:33-36). In reference to (a), a common form of mitigation is to begin a series of commands with an imperative and then shift to w (cons) perfect (as in Genesis 45:9-13). In social situations which call for a more complete mitigation all imperatives are replaced by w (cons) perfect (as in Genesis 40:14-15).

In applying the rank scale for Hortatory discourse to the analysis of a hortatory discourse we must know whether mitigation has been at work or not. In a completely unmitigated hortatory discourse, w (cons) perfect ranks lower than command forms, while in a partially mitigated hortatory discourse, w (cons) perfect is of the same rank as command forms. In wholly mitigated hortatory discourse, there is a shift to the surface structure of predictive discourse. Of all the discourse types, Hortatory discourse is the most responsive to the sociolinguistic situation in which a discourse takes place. In narrative parts of the Hebrew Bible we find depicted the social situations which surround the hortatory discourses which occur in the stories.

3.1. Hortatory Sequence Paragraphs. Genesis 43:11-14 is a completely unmitigated hortatory discourse. Two paragraphs within it are apparently meant to present consecutive commands. In both passages the verb laqah 'take' is used as the first member of a sequence before a motion verb.

Example 12 (Genesis 43:11):

$BU_1$: qᵊḥû$_1$ mizzimrat$_2$ hā?āreṣ$_3$ bikêlêkem$_4$

$BU_n$: wᵊhôrîdû$_1$ lā?îš$_2$ minḥā$_3$......

$BU_1$: 'Take$_1$ of the best produce of$_2$ the land$_3$ in your vessels$_4$.'

$BU_n$: 'And take down$_1$ to the man$_2$ an offering$_3$.....'

Here both verbs are imperatives.

Example 13 (Genesis 43:13):

$BU_1$: wᵊ?et ?āḥîkem$_1$ qāḥû$_2$

$BU_n$: wᵊqûmû$_1$

BU$_n$: ḥabīʾū$_1$ šeber$_2$ raʿābōn$_3$ bāttē$_4$.

THESIS: 'If$_1$ honest men$_2$ (are) you$_3$ (let) one of$_5$
your brothers$_4$ be bound$_6$ in the house of$_7$
your imprisonment$_8$.'

ANTI: Hortatory Sequence paragraph

BU$_1$: 'As for the rest of you$_1$ go$_2$.'

BU$_n$: 'Take$_1$ famine$_3$ relief$_2$ to your households$_4$.'

Here the jussive yēʾāsēr (occasioned by a third person
subject) of sentence one is balanced against the closely-
related imperatives of sentences two and three. Again, we
have an antithetical paragraph whose members are of equal
rank.

In Example 18, however, we have a Hortatory Antithetical
paragraph of the fore-weighted variety.

Example 18 (Genesis 43:14):

THESIS: Hortatory Result paragraph

TEXT: wē$_1$/ʾēl$_2$ šadday$_3$ yitten$_4$ lākem$_5$ raḥāmīm$_6$
lipnē$_7$ hāʾīš$_8$.

RESULT: wēšillaḥ$_1$ lākem ʾet-ʾāḥīkem ʾaḥēr wēʾet-
binyāmīn.

ANTI: waʾānī$_1$ kaʾāšer$_2$ šākōltī$_3$ šākāltī$_4$.

THESIS: Hortatory Result paragraph

TEXT: 'And (may)$_1$ El$_2$ Shaddai$_3$ give$_4$ you$_5$ mercy$_6$
before$_7$ the man$_8$.'

RESULT: 'And he will release$_1$ to you$_2$ your other
brother$_3$... and Benjamin$_5$.'

ANTI: 'As for me$_1$ if$_2$ I am bereaved$_3$ I am bereaved$_4$.'

In this paragraph, the salient clause is the first
sentence with its jussive form. The second sentence with
its w (cons) perfect is represented as the natural conse-
quence of the first. To both of these sentences, sentence
three is opposed: 'Nay God have mercy but (if he doesn't)
I'll have to resign myself to what comes.' The third
sentence has a perfect used as an unmarked future perfect.

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4.0. EXPOSITORY DISCOURSE. I do not explicitly
construct here a verb/clause rank scheme for Expository
discourse in Biblical Hebrew. Expository discourse is
by its nature the most static of all types of discourse.
It selects as its main line the very elements that are
at the bottom of the three clines represented in Diagrams
1-3. Of these elements, the nominal clause is the most
static, while next in rank are clauses with the verb hāyā
'be'. Participles, which represent ongoing activities,
and stative perfects and imperfects possibly rank still
lower. Other tenses, especially those ranking high in
Narrative and Predictive discourses, are at the bottom
of the scheme however it be constructed.

In presenting expository paragraphs below, note that
the failure to provide examples of expository variants of
the Sequence paragraph is not due to a lacuna in the
data but represents a systematic gap. Sequence implies
action but expository discourse is static. We do not
have static variants of dynamic paragraphs. However,
all the other paragraph types in my system in principle
should have expository variants. I regard the failure to
document such a variant in our present data as a gap to
be filled in as our corpus widens to include more of the
Hebrew Bible.

In keeping with the restricted sampling of paragraph
types in the size limits of the present paper I present
here examples of Expository Reason and Result paragraphs
as well as Expository Antithetical paragraphs. However,
these data require contextual interpretation to establish
their expository rather than narrative nature. I depart
from the usual procedure of this paper to present immediately
below a more clear cut example of exposition, even though
it involves paragraph types which have not been previously
illustrated.

Example 19 (Genesis 41:25-26):

Expository Evidence paragraph (cyclic)

TEXT: COMMENT paragraph

TEXT: ḥālōm$_1$ parʿōh$_2$ ʾeḥād$_3$ hūʾ$_4$
COMMENT: ʾet-ʾāšer$_1$ hāʾelōhīm$_2$
higgīd$_4$ lēparʿōh$_5$.

EVIDENCE$_1$: šeba'$_1$ pārōt$_2$ haṭṭōbōt$_3$ šeba'$_4$
šānīm$_5$ hēmnā$_6$

TEXT: COMMENT paragraph

TEXT: ḥālōm$_1$ parʿōh$_2$ ʾeḥād$_3$ hūʾ$_4$
COMMENT: ʾet-ʾāšer$_1$ hāʾelōhīm$_2$
higgīd$_4$ lēparʿōh$_5$.

EVIDENCE$_2$: wēšeba'$_1$ haššibālīm$_2$ haṭṭōbōt$_3$
šeba'$_4$ šānīm$_5$ hēmnā$_6$

TEXT: ḥālōm$_1$ ʾeḥād$_2$ hūʾ$_3$.

TEXT: 'The dream of$_1$ Pharaoh$_2$ it$_4$ (is) one$_3$.'

COMMENT: 'That which$_1$ God is about to do$_3$ he has declared$_4$ to Pharaoh$_5$.'

EVIDENCE : '(As for) the seven$_1$ good$_3$ cattle$_7$, seven$_1$ years$_5$ (are) they$_6$.'

EVIDENCE : 'And (as for) the seven$_1$ good$_3$ ears$_2$, seven$_1$ years$_5$ (are) they$_6$.'

TEXT: 'One$_2$ dream$_1$ (is) it$_3$.'

Of the five sentences in this paragraph, four are nominal clauses and appear to be the backbone of a structure in which a conclusion/claim is made and then evidence presented in support of that conclusion/claim (rather than the opposite syllogistic order from evidence to conclusion). On the suggestion of Alan Healey, I have termed such structures Evidence paragraphs. Sentence two contains an active verb, a perfect h⁵gid 'he-has-declared'. I consider this to be off the line of exposition and to be essentially an added comment. Here we have a two-sentence embedded comment paragraph. Notice that if this were a narrative paragraph, Sentence two would contain the highest ranking verb form. Here in an expository structure, it ranks very low.

Many paragraph types have cyclic variants in which similar elements bracket the whole. Here Text re-affirms the content of the Text. Such cyclic variants sometimes are developed as intricate chiastic structures (Genesis 37:34; 39:21-23; 41:54b-57; 42:14-17; and others).

4.1. Expository Reason and Result Paragraphs. In Genesis 42:21,22 occur two paragraphs which probably should be construed as expository, one Result and one Reason. Alternatively, these paragraphs could be construed as narrative. Depending on the contextual interpretation as expository or narrative, the internal interpretation of these paragraphs varies accordingly. If the paragraphs are expository, then the more static elements of the paragraphs are dominant. If, however, the paragraphs are narrative, then the more dynamic elements of the paragraph are dominant. Examples such as these underscore (1) the necessity of contextual interpretation at every stage of structural analysis; and (2) the inverse relation of elements in narrative and exposition.

The contextual situation of 42:21,22 is as follows: Joseph's brothers are before Joseph (incognito) who has become Lord of Egypt and who has assumed a threatening attitude toward them when they came to buy grain for

survival in the... one. Thirteen or more years have elapsed since they sold Joseph into slavery, but their consciences are still heavy with the burden of the crime. Puzzled at the harsh words and threats which Joseph (incognito) hurls at them, they are thrashing around for an explanation of the bad fortune. This I believe to be the real thrust of the following examples. It could be argued that the brothers are simply reminiscing out loud and that the structures amount to brief narratives. I do not, however, feel that the latter is as probable as the former.

Example 20 (Genesis 42:21):

Expository Result paragraph

TEXT: /ăbāl$_1$ /ăšēmîm$_2$ /ănaḥnú$_3$ 'al-$_4$ /āḥînú$_5$
/ašer$_6$

[N Antithetical paragraph backloops into relative clause]

THESIS: rā'înú$_7$ sārat$_8$ napešóg běḥltanénú$_{10}$
rēlénú$_{11}$.

ANTI: wělō'$_{12}$ šāma nú$_{13}$

RESULT: 'al-kēn$_1$ bā'á$_2$ ?ēlénú$_3$ haṣṣārā$_4$ hazzū'$_5$.

TEXT: 'Truly$_1$ are guilty$_2$ we$_3$ on account of$_4$ our brother$_5$ whom$_6$'

THESIS: saw we$_7$ the distress of$_8$ his soul$_9$
in his beseeching$_{10}$ us$_{11}$

ANTI: and not$_{12}$ hearkened we$_{13}$'

RESULT: 'Therefore$_1$ has come$_2$ on us$_3$ this$_5$
distress$_4$.'

The Text here is a nominal clause: 'Surely we (are), guilty on an account of our brother...' The Relative Clause which depends on 'āhînú 'our brother' backloops a narrative antithetical paragraph with verbs in the perfect. Here the action verbs are embedded within the nominal clause and, indeed, come in by way of explaining the nominal word 'ăšēmîm 'guilty'. The Result is a clause with a perfect: 'On account of this/therefore this distress has come upon us'. This analysis considers the nominal clause to be dominant in this paragraph, and the perfects to occur in elements which are in secondary function.